



# U.S. EPA REGION 9

## BORDER 2012 QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER

CALIFORNIA, BAJA CALIFORNIA, ARIZONA AND SONORA  
MARCH TO JUNE 2011

[www.epa.gov/border2012](http://www.epa.gov/border2012)

*Key Border 2012 Guiding Principles: Reduce the Highest Public Health Risks and Preserve and Restore the Environment; Strengthen Capacity of Local Communities and Stakeholders to Manage Environmental and Environmentally-related Public Health Issues along the U.S.-Mexico Border and address disproportionate environmental impacts in border communities.*

### UPDATES

**Joint Regional Task Force Meetings** [lorena.lopez-powers@epa.gov](mailto:lorena.lopez-powers@epa.gov) – 619-235-4768

The California-Baja California and Arizona/Sonora Regional Workgroup Co-chairs met during the National Coordinators Meeting in May to discuss strategies for improving coordination and the efficiency of task force meetings. It was agreed that regional task force meetings will take place jointly or on the same day in order to improve coordination, communication and reduce cost. The Arizona-Sonora Workgroup Co-chairs began the trend and had their first Arizona-Sonora joint task force meetings in February and also finalized the [Arizona-Sonora Action Plan](#) to identify key priorities, projects and actions taking place in the Arizona-Sonora border region. Upcoming meetings:

*Arizona-Sonora Task Forces*

September 29

Desert Diamond Facility  
1100 W Pima Mine Rd.  
Sahuarita, AZ 85629

*California-Baja California Task Forces*

October 19

National City, Location to be determined

**Regional Administrator Jared Blumenfeld meets with Border NGOs** [torres.tomas@epa.gov](mailto:torres.tomas@epa.gov) - 619-235-4775

On June 7, 2011, Regional Administrator Jared Blumenfeld met with representatives of various non-governmental organizations doing work along the U.S.-Mexico border. The purpose of the meeting was to help EPA learn about local challenges, initiatives, and priorities, so that EPA can better provide assistance and/or support.

### DATES TO REMEMBER

**SEPTEMBER 19, 2011** – OPENING OF PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD ON THE NEW U.S.-MEXICO ENVIRONMENTAL PROGRAM, BORDER 2020

We would like to get your input during the 60 day comment period which opens September 19, 2011. Come and listen to a presentation, ask questions, and provide your comments and input at the following public meetings:

#### **PUBLIC MEETINGS IN CA AND AZ:**

September 28 5-8 pm	Holiday Inn Express 850 W Shell Road, Nogales, AZ 85621
October 5 6-8 pm	City Council Chambers 608 Heber Avenue Calexico, CA 92231
October 18 6-8 pm	National City, CA Location: check website for updates

#### **WEBINARS**

November 9	in English
November 10	in Spanish

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Present were Environmental Health Coalition, Comité Civico del Valle, San Diego Coast Keeper, Chollas Creek, Surfrider Foundation, Wildcoast, the Southwest Wetlands Interpretive Association and the Tijuana River Recovery Team. EPA is following up on various issues and suggestions that were identified at the meeting.

**Region 9 Border 2012 Request for Proposal (RFP)** [garcia.jose@epa.gov](mailto:garcia.jose@epa.gov) - 415-972-3331: In collaboration with the Border Environment Cooperation Commission (BECC) an RFP was released on June 1 seeking projects that meet the Border 2012 final unmet objective: Implement a pilot project to change agricultural practices, resulting in reduced use of toxic pesticides. The RFP closed on July 1 and the proposal review and final selection will be completed by mid to late-August.

**National Coordinators Meeting** [garcia.jose@epa.gov](mailto:garcia.jose@epa.gov) - 415-972-3331: The National Coordinator's Meeting (NCM) was held on May 10-11 in San Antonio, TX. The National Coordinators, Michelle DePass (EPA) and Enrique Lendo (SEMARNAT) participated in several portions of the Meeting which culminated in the development of the [Joint Communiqué](#). Key highlights included: discussion and progress towards the development of the successor Border Program Goals and Objectives; special workshops on "Innovative Solutions to Environmental Problems" and "Dust and Particulate Abatement in the Border Region"; and, the release of the [2011 Border Progress Report](#), [Tribal Accomplishments and Issues Report](#) and the [2010 Indicators Report](#).

**New Binational Border Program** [torres.tomas@epa.gov](mailto:torres.tomas@epa.gov) - 619-235-4775: Significant progress has been made over the last three months towards the drafting of the new Border Program and its goals and objectives. The first draft of the goals and objectives was shared at the NCM, and it is undergoing revision, based on input and comments received at the meeting. A 60-day public comment period will begin September 19, 2011 to obtain additional input and recommendations from the public and border stakeholders. The planning for the public meetings is underway. The final bi-national border program document is expected to be released at a public signing ceremony in August of 2012.

**Borderwide Communication** [banos.alheli@epa.gov](mailto:banos.alheli@epa.gov) - 619-235-4767: Based on significant stakeholder input, Regions 9 and 6 are working with SEMARNAT's Unidad de Coordinación de Asuntos Internacionales (UCAI) and with the EPA's Office of International and Tribal Affairs (OITA) to develop a first draft of a Border-wide communication plan to facilitate internal and external communication and information dissemination between the many entities working together binationally to implement the next Border Program. A chapter on communication is being drafted and will be incorporated in the new border program document. A longer, more detailed plan will be created and updated regularly to ensure that communication needs are being met. The main goal of the plan is to establish guidelines that are easy to implement so that the exchange of communication is always a top priority.

**State of the Border Region Indicators Report** [fong.vance@epa.gov](mailto:fong.vance@epa.gov) - 415-972-3798: The final Indicators Report: [State of the Border Region 2010](#) is now available for review. The U.S. EPA, SEMARNAT, border region tribes and Mexican indigenous communities, state and local agencies, and BECC have worked for over a year to complete the report, which provides information on the status and trends of environmental quality and environmental health in the U.S.-Mexico border region. It also illustrates progress made under the U.S.-Mexico Border 2012 program and identifies areas for further binational work beyond 2012. This report builds on the flagship [State of the Border Region Indicators Report, 2005](#).

## GOAL UPDATES

### GOAL 1 – REDUCE WATER CONTAMINATION

**BECC Project Certification** [cox.susan@epa.gov](mailto:cox.susan@epa.gov), 415-972-3555: On May 20, 2011, the Board of Directors of the BECC and the North American Development Bank certified two wastewater infrastructure projects in Tijuana that, when completed, will connect approximately 4,237 households to the Rosarito Norte Wastewater Treatment Plant. These communities are known as "Alcatrazes" and "Plan Libertador." \$1.93M in Border Environment Infrastructure Fund (BEIF) was authorized by the Board, which will make the \$4.5M projects affordable for the communities.

**EPA Infrastructure Funding** [aguirre.hector@epa.gov](mailto:aguirre.hector@epa.gov), 415-972-3213: The project ranking and selection process is complete for the FY11/12 Project Development and Assistance Program (PDAP) and the BEIF prioritization. The BECC received 86 proposals from the Region 9 border states of California, Arizona, Sonora and Baja California. The proposals represented an estimated total construction cost of \$280 million. The results of the process were announced in May 2011. A total of 11 projects were selected, with 2 in California and 3 each in Arizona, Sonora, and Baja California.



View of the border fence from the Tijuana River Estuary in Imperial Beach, CA

#### **AZ/Sonora Border 2012 Water Task Force Meeting**

[liden.douglas@epa.gov](mailto:liden.douglas@epa.gov), 619-235-4763: On February 3, 2011, the Arizona Department of Environmental Quality (ADEQ) and the State of Sonora Water Commission (CEA) co-chaired the Arizona/Sonora Border 2012 Water Task Force meeting in Nogales, Sonora. ADEQ delivered two presentations; the first summarized water quality challenges in the border region and the second summarized the status and outcomes of projects facilitated by the Water Task Force. CEA delivered a presentation on water conservation initiatives in Sonora, including water harvesting. The meeting concluded with a brief review of all water task force priorities and a solicitation for members to consider modifications and/or new priorities for the next iteration of a U.S.-Mexico border environmental program.

#### **Tijuana River Watershed Border 2012 Task Force**

**Meeting** [liden.douglas@epa.gov](mailto:liden.douglas@epa.gov), 619-235-4763: On March 17, 2011, a joint Tijuana Watershed Border 2012 Task Force / [Tijuana National Estuarine Research Reserve](#) (TRNERR) Advisory Council meeting was held. This was the first time that these two workgroups held a public meeting together. Updates were provided by various government agencies on the TRNERR Advisory Council. Following these updates, formal presentations were made by EPA, the Regional Water Quality

Control Board, and California State Parks on the binational water quality issues facing the estuary. The meeting was well attended by over 50 individuals from both sides of the border, including a representative of the recently elected Mayor of Tijuana.



## GOAL 2 – REDUCE AIR POLLUTION

**Sonora Climate Action Plan** [vineyard.christine@epa.gov](mailto:vineyard.christine@epa.gov) – 415-947-4125: This Border 2012-funded Climate Action Plan is being developed to identify strategies to reduce greenhouse gas emissions in the State of Sonora. The work plan contract between the Center for Climate Strategies and the State of Sonora has been signed. On June 6-7 the BECC held a final webinar to assist the state-appointed Climate Advisory Groups and guide the Technical Working Groups that support their action to develop effective, quantifiable and implementable policies. A final report is expected by September 30, 2011.

**Rio Rico Landfill Gas to Energy Project Phase 2** [vineyard.christine@epa.gov](mailto:vineyard.christine@epa.gov) – 415-947-4125: This newly-funded project will develop the preliminary design and planning steps to build a project that will: capture GHG, produce renewable electricity, promote environmental stewardship, reduce risks to human health, improve energy efficiency, and assist the local utility company with their Renewable Energy Portfolio in Ambos Nogales air shed. Design plans are 30% complete.

## GOAL 3 – REDUCE LAND CONTAMINATION

**Cal-Recycle Funds a Scrap Tire Management Plan** [pimentel.emily@epa.gov](mailto:pimentel.emily@epa.gov), 415-972-3326: **CalRecycle** reported that they have entered into an Interagency Agreement with the University of California, Berkeley for *Technical Assistance for the Creation of a Methodology for the Development of a Model Integrated Waste Tire Management Plan Framework for the State of Baja California, Mexico*. Dr. Blas Perez Henriquez is the lead for this project. A stakeholders meeting will take place in late Fall with the final report due in Spring, 2012. Dr. Howard Levenson, Deputy Director of the Materials Management & Local Assistance Division at Cal-Recycle is serving as the lead for border scrap tire issues with his agency.



Illegal dumping site in Mexico

### **Workshop on Beneficial Use of Organic Materials**

**held in Tijuana** [pimentel.emily@epa.gov](mailto:pimentel.emily@epa.gov), 415-972-3326: **Tijuana Calidad de Vida** (TCV), an urban planning non-profit, organized the first regional workshop on beneficial uses of organic materials including: food scraps, landscape cuttings, biosolids (generated from the waste water treatment plant process), and livestock waste (generated from concentrated animal feed lots). The workshop was sponsored by the American Consulate office in Tijuana in response to growing interest in the establishment of the first community urban composting center being planned under a Border 2012 grant. Speakers included representatives from: Cities of San Francisco and San Diego, and Solano County, as well as federal, state and local government officials from Baja California. Approximately 90 people attended. TCV also met with representatives of the City of Tijuana to finalize the agreement that will allow them to partner with the city and use city property to establish the composting center.

**Border-wide Waste Policy Forum and Tire Workgroup** [pimentel.emily@epa.gov](mailto:pimentel.emily@epa.gov), 415-972-3326: The Borderwide **Waste Policy Forum** (WPF) and associated Tire Workgroup met on March 30-April 1 in San Diego. The WPF participants provided input on the proposed priorities for the next Border Program and the Tire Workgroup provided highlights of scrap tire projects, issues, and future work proposed in the border region.

**Community-based Activities to Improve Solid Waste Management in Tijuana** [pimentel.emily@epa.gov](mailto:pimentel.emily@epa.gov), 415-972-3326: [Wildcoast](#) and [Tijuana Calidad de Vida](#) are both working to provide community-based leadership training. They completed presentations to the Institute of Municipal Planning ([IMPLAN](#)) the local planning agency, to members of the sub-basin council of Los Laureles, and the local school board. These presentations set the groundwork to involve the community, train locals to serve as leaders, and incorporate activities within the school curriculum. The expected start date for the school-teacher workshops will be in the Fall 2011. Alter Terra, a project partner, developed the content for two Environmental Education Workshops in partnership with two environmental education experts from the Universidad Pedagógica Nacional Tijuana Campus and from Grupo Kaizen who will lead the workshops. The “Social Participation and Coordination for Community Intervention Projects” workshop will provide community members with the knowledge and tools on how to coordinate their own community-led projects. A second workshop “Ethics and Leadership” will give participants the visioning tools to see themselves as agents of change in their community. Work was also completed on the development of a pre- and post- evaluation survey, which will serve to measure the total impact of the project’s activities. The survey will be given to workshop participants prior to starting the workshops and upon completion. This will help us measure the impact of the project’s workshops and activities.

**Arizona Border Trash** [pimentel.emily@epa.gov](mailto:pimentel.emily@epa.gov), 415-972-3326: The ADEQ worked on enhancements to the [Arizona Border Trash Web site](#). ADEQ has been available to the Tohono O’odham Nation to assist with any updates reflecting past cleanups in the Nation. ADEQ has also shared information with Border Lands Management Task Force led by the U.S. Bureau of Land Management, about the new system. Arizona Game and Fish Department, Arizona Department of Corrections, Student Conservation Association, among others, continue to be involved with funded or volunteer cleanups and have been encouraged to use the ADEQ webpage/database to report cleanups. Due to press coverage in January, the website received 23,000 hits: <http://www.azbordertrash.gov/>.

## GOAL 4 – IMPROVE ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH

**Funding from Children’s Environmental Health Office** [stewart.kathleen@epa.gov](mailto:stewart.kathleen@epa.gov) – 415-947-4119: EPA will implement the *Reducing Children’s Exposures to Lead, Pesticides, and Asthma Triggers* project, in the Imperial Valley. The project will train approximately 50 health outreach workers (*promotoras*), provide over 200 visits to homes and childcare environments, and distribute over 200 kits containing tools for reducing exposures of children to indoor environmental health threats (such as tools for integrated pest management, less toxic cleaning products, allergen-proof pillow and mattress covers, lead testing kits, etc).

**Reducing Exposure to Unhealthy Air in Imperial Valley, California** [banos.alheli@epa.gov](mailto:banos.alheli@epa.gov) – 619-235-4767:

Through a Border 2012 grant, the California [Department of Public Health, Environmental Health Investigations Branch](#) gave a presentation on the Reducing Exposure to Unhealthy Air in Imperial Valley “Flag Project” during the CA/Baja CA Task Force meeting on June 30 in Tijuana. They have successfully adapted the air quality flag notification program and indoor activity curriculum for Calexico schools. Initially, they had committed to work with five Calexico schools on how to use local air monitoring data to reduce exposure to air pollutants, especially among sensitive populations. However, due to the active community engagement and education from local NGO [Comité Civico](#), and the [American Lung Association](#), 7 additional schools in the Calexico Unified



Holding up a flag, Aurora High School, Imperial Valley, CA

School District received training (for a total of 12 schools) on how to use local air monitoring data. These



schools are participating in the Flag Program by flying a colored flag corresponding to the air quality level of the day. Not only are schools flying the flag, they are also reporting when air monitoring stations and/or the [Imperial Valley Air Pollution Control District's website](#) are not reporting properly. Outreach has also been made to the Imperial County Office of Education, the Calexico Unified School District's principals, teachers, and parents.

**Healthy Homes Workshop** [prijatel.jean@epa.gov](mailto:prijatel.jean@epa.gov) – 415-947-4167: The EPA Border Team is identifying partners for a “Healthy Homes” training to be held in the Imperial Valley. The training is set for September 13<sup>th</sup> at CalWORKS in El Centro. A list of local community groups, city governments, and Imperial County departments that could benefit from the training is being compiled by the EPA Border Team. The one-day course is designed for community health workers and is focused on the actual practice of delivering information on healthy homes. To see the announcement or register, [click here](#) or send an email to [prijatel.jean@epa.gov](mailto:prijatel.jean@epa.gov).

**Lead Education on the Border** [banos.alheli@epa.gov](mailto:banos.alheli@epa.gov) – 619-235-4767: Jackie Zaldaña, an EPA student worker from U.C. Riverside developed a lead education and outreach project in the border region. Jackie completed a comprehensive PowerPoint presentation with lead poisoning prevention information and presented it in English and Spanish to patients of the La [Maestra Community Clinic](#) in the City Heights neighborhood in San Diego. The completed PowerPoint will be shared with community health clinics for their continued use in their lead poisoning prevention outreach and education efforts.



Ag burn in Calexico, CA

### **Agricultural Burning: Air Monitoring and Exposure Reduction in Imperial County, California**

[banos.alheli@epa.gov](mailto:banos.alheli@epa.gov) – 619-235-4767: At the June 30<sup>th</sup> CA/BC Environmental Health Task Force, a presentation was given by the [California Department of Public Health - Office of Binational Border Health](#) on the findings of their Border 2012 funded project [Agricultural Burning: Air Monitoring and Exposure Reduction in Imperial County](#). The study found extremely high levels of particulate matter when air monitoring was conducted directly downwind from a burn, (6,500 mg per cubic meter). A 24 hour average was also high, (300mg /m<sup>3</sup>). The results also showed that naphthalene is released (although not at actionable levels), and a significant amount of black carbon and soot is also released. In addition to PM 2.5 there were also levels of PM 1.0 detected in the

smoke. Several fact sheets were developed to target farmers, schools, and the general public to help avoid excessive exposure to the smoke and to increase awareness. It was also recommended that farmers observe a “good neighbor policy” and notify their neighbors of a burn event. A task force participant commented that he and many others live in Mexico within 100 meters of the agricultural fields that take place on the U.S. side of the border. They are deeply affected by the burns and their clothes, homes and everything is overwhelmed by the smoke. He commented that a “good neighbor” policy is a good idea especially for those living so close to the burns. Click on the link above for the full report or here for a [summary of the report](#).

### **Reducing Diesel Emissions Impacting School Children in Tijuana, Mexico** [banos.alheli@epa.gov](mailto:banos.alheli@epa.gov) – 619-235-4767:

Through a Border 2012 grant, the [Environmental Health Coalition](#) (EHC) continues to work with the local



Members of the Colonia Chilpancingo Youth Group

community to change the routing of heavy diesel maquiladora and commercial border truck traffic impacting a neighborhood in Tijuana. EHC, the [Colectivo Chilpancingo](#), and the Youth Group, met with the Environment and Sustainable Development Commission for the Tijuana City Council. The president of the council committed to organizing a community tour with representatives of the municipal Environmental Protection and Urban Development agencies. On March 9, two EHC staff and eleven members of the Colectivo hosted the tour, joined by a graduate student from San Diego State University. Representatives from both Tijuana's Environmental Protection Agency and Urban Planning and Transportation participated in the tour. The government representatives proposed an initial step of limiting truck traffic passing the Kindergarten, elementary and secondary schools to 11 p.m. – 5 a.m., in advance of approval and enforcement of an ordinance. They also proposed posting signage banning the school routes for heavy duty truck traffic. This project is 82% complete.

### **Transferable Training Modules on Environmental Health for *Promotoras* on the U.S.-Mexico Border**

[banos.alheli@epa.gov](mailto:banos.alheli@epa.gov) – 619-235-4767: Through a Border 2012 grant, the [University of Arizona's U.S.-Mexico Binational Center](#) is developing transferable training modules on arsenic, pesticides, environmental toxicology, and fate and transport of contaminants for *promotoras*. These modules are now in draft form and staff has begun pilot trainings (using the modules) with collaborating *promotoras*. Three pilot trainings (completed on April 29<sup>th</sup>, May 16<sup>th</sup>, and May 18<sup>th</sup>) focused on refining the draft versions of the modules. These trainings were provided by Denise Moreno Ramirez from the UA (Community Engagement Coordinator) and Lourdes Veja ([Sonora Environmental Research Institute](#) *promotora*) to a cohort of new *promotoras* that will be involved in a Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) healthy homes project. The module themes presented included pesticides and the fate and transport of lead (the original module was modified to focus on lead). As a result of the input obtained, the modules were refined and modified to be more “well rounded” before introducing them in a more formal trainings setting. The schedule for the remaining pilot trainings has been established. This project is 85% complete and on schedule for completion in early 2012.



Promotoras in training

## **GOAL 5 – JOINT EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS AND RESPONSE**

### **Border 2012 Emergency Response Task Force for**

**California-Baja California** [tan.lida@epa.gov](mailto:tan.lida@epa.gov) – 415-972-3018: The Border 2012 Emergency Response Task Force meeting took place in San Diego, California on June 9, 2011. Key highlights from the meeting included: 1) Training from the Los Angeles County Fire Department on the challenges of fighting combustible metal fires. The training covered the origin of the materials and the chemistry of these types of fires. The training also included photographs and videos of recent titanium fires in the city of Los Angeles; 2) the County of San Diego announced that they have excess emergency response equipment that they can transfer to Baja California, including decontamination tents that the county no longer uses; and 3) an update from the San Diego



Emergency Responder Training

Department of Environmental Health gave an update on the Border 2012 grant for reducing children's mercury exposure through public education and first responder training. The grant has been completed and the final report will be translated into Spanish and developed into a presentation (one for responders and one for the general public). The next task force meeting will be held in Tecate, Baja California on October 4, 2011. The goal will be to hold two simultaneous training courses in the morning; one on the challenges of fighting combustible metals fires, and the other on radiation awareness. A separate meeting will be held on October 3, 2011 to complete the Improvement Plan for the Imperial County/Mexicali After Action Report.

## GOAL 6 – ENVIRONMENTAL STEWARDSHIP

### Border Area Development and Growth of Environmental Responsibility (BADGER) Project

[garcia.jose@epa.gov](mailto:garcia.jose@epa.gov), 415-972-3331: The County of San Diego and members of the *Negocio Verde* Environmental Justice (EJ) Task Force conducted bilingual outreach to automotive business owners and operators in San Diego County to participate in the April 20th Compliance Workshop, and May 18<sup>th</sup> EMS Workshop.

Approximately 50 business owners participated in each event and will be contacted to attend the July 20<sup>th</sup> EMS and August 27<sup>th</sup> HAZWOPER courses that are being offered.



Border Area Development & Growth of Environmental Responsibility

### Sustainable Business Practices, Your Key to a Competitive Future [garcia.jose@epa.gov](mailto:garcia.jose@epa.gov), 415-972-3331: Through a



Border 2012 grant, the San Diego [Industrial Environmental Association](#) (IEA) is assisting companies to evaluate their environmental practices and help them select suppliers, vendors, and contractors that provide products and

services that follow environmental standards consistent with sustainability goals. Thus far, IEA has developed outreach material, including factsheets and a website (<http://www.usmexicosustainablebusinesspractices.com>). They have also established a “baseline of environmental performance” for participants by analyzing similar industries with EMS or ISO 14001 programs in Baja California. In addition, IEA has identified potential industrial partners to participate in the workshops and has developed a course outline and curriculum. Individual company interviews have proven more difficult to schedule than expected due to facility demands and reluctance to share sensitive information.

**Assessing Facility Compliance Status** [garcia.jose@epa.gov](mailto:garcia.jose@epa.gov), 415-972-3331: EPA has drafted a report that captures enforcement and compliance information on the “major” sources of air pollution, discharges to sensitive waters, and hazardous wastes at federally regulated facilities in the California and Arizona Border Region. The report includes enforcement actions under 15 statutes regulating pollution discharges on the U.S. side of the Border, consistent with Goal 6, Objectives 2 (identifying and increasing compliance of pollution sources along the border). The report is undergoing internal review and will be completed by August, 2011.